

# Inspection of Combe Martin Primary School

Hangman Path, Combe Martin, Ilfracombe, Devon EX34 0DF

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Inspection dates:	3 and 4 December 2024
The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Dee Seddon. This school is part of Alumnis Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Neil Moir, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sian Kate Jenkins.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils take pride in attending this happy and welcoming school. They actively work towards the school's vision, 'aim high, be proud'. The school is working towards realising this shared vision through its efforts to improve the curriculum. With support and guidance from the trust, the work on the curriculum intent demonstrates the high expectations now set for pupils. However, since some of this work is still in its infancy, pupils are not yet reaching this ambition and so they are not yet learning the curriculum well enough.

Most pupils show positive attitudes to their learning. Through the development of character, pupils focus on virtues that make a difference to how well they learn and contribute to their community. For example, through the virtue of 'resilience', they know not to give up and to have a go at new challenges.

The wide range of opportunities the school provides to pupils is a strength. Trips and experiences enhance the curriculum. For example, a local dentist visits pupils to share the importance of oral hygiene. Pupils learn about beach safety through their annual 'surf life-saving day'. This supports them to keep safe in their community at the local beach.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

The school is improving how well pupils learn through the development of a well-sequenced curriculum. It has identified the important knowledge pupils need to know and remember across subjects, starting in the early years. This helps teachers to know what to teach pupils and when.

However, the teaching of the curriculum is variable. This is because teaching does not yet consistently meet the expectations of the ambitious curriculum. This means pupils' work does not always match what the school wants pupils to learn. Consequently, some pupils are not building their knowledge of the curriculum securely. This includes in early years, where sometimes there is not enough clarity about what staff want children to learn. This hinders children's learning.

The checks the school makes on how well pupils are learning the curriculum are not yet effective. Some checks do not identify important gaps in knowledge to ensure future learning builds on what pupils know and can do. This results in pupils having unknown gaps in knowledge or some pupils making repeated errors in their learning that go unaddressed. This stalls progress through the curriculum for these pupils.

The school promotes a love of reading. This starts in Nursery, where staff support children to develop their communication and language skills. This prepares them for when they learn to read. The school teaches children in the Reception Year to read, following the intended phonics programme. However, they are not learning to read well enough. This is because the school does not give children all the support they need to practise and embed the new sounds they are learning. Pupils further up the school benefit from reading books that match the sounds they know. The school checks and supports any

gaps pupils have in their reading knowledge. This helps them to become confident and fluent readers over time.

The school has worked hard to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff adapt learning to enable these pupils to learn alongside their peers. This is helping these pupils to learn at their stage of development. Even so, the shortcomings in the implementation of the curriculum are also having an impact on pupils with SEND. Along with others, these pupils do not develop detailed knowledge across the curriculum as well as they could.

Staff take time to build positive relationships with pupils. This helps pupils to learn in a nurturing environment. The school provides additional support to pupils who may struggle to manage their behaviour. In addition, pupils and families benefit from high-quality pastoral support. The school works with families to ensure that pupils attend school well.

The school supports pupils to be active citizens. For example, the school teaches pupils about the importance of looking after their community by joining in with local beach cleans. Through pupil leadership roles and the trust's 'inspiring changemakers', pupils know they make a difference to others. For example, pupils raise money for charities that they decide they want to support. To develop interests, pupils benefit from a range of clubs, including choir and gardening club. The school makes adaptations to its offer to ensure all pupils benefit, including those who are disadvantaged.

The school, trust and those responsible for governance have an accurate view of the school. They know the school's strengths and where there is more work to do.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The school does not support some children in the early years well enough to develop important elements of their learning across several areas. As a result, these children do not have the opportunity to build solid foundations to prepare them well for future learning. The trust must develop staff expertise to ensure children deepen their understanding across all areas of learning, preparing them well for key stage 1.
- There is variation in the effectiveness of the implementation of the curriculum. This is because some learning does not consistently meet the ambitions of the intended curriculum. As a result, some pupils do not learn well. The trust must ensure it develops staff expertise to teach the intended curriculum with the same high ambition of the curriculum intent to help pupils learn well across subjects.
- Some checks the school makes on how well pupils are learning the curriculum do not always help pupils to build their knowledge well. As a result, some pupils have gaps

and so do not deepen their knowledge based on what they know and remember. The trust needs to ensure that checks are precise so that subsequent learning builds on what pupils know to help pupils to build knowledge securely.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	145764
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10322317
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	142
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Sian Kate Jenkins
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Neil Moir
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dee Seddon
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.combemartin-sch.org">www.combemartin-sch.org</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	7 and 8 March 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Combe Martin Primary School is part of Alumnis Multi-Academy Trust.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2022.
- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school. Pupils are organised into four mixed-age classes. The school accepts children from two years old.
- The school provides a before- and after-school club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form

provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with school leaders, curriculum leaders, parents, governors and representatives from the trust.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Additionally, the inspectors spoke to pupils to discuss their views about the school.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.

## **Inspection team**

Esther Best, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Matthew Shirley

Ofsted Inspector

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